V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Study Team conducted an extensive evaluation of transportation conditions in the Study Area. This study was a continuation and an expansion of the transportation work conducted in conjunction with the development of the Takoma Central District Plan[1]. The main goals of this study were to examine existing and future transportation conditions and determine short-term and long-term improvements to reduce traffic congestion, especially during peak morning and evening travel hours; improve traffic and pedestrian safety; protect surrounding residential streets from traffic impacts; enhance transit service; and improve bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities in the study area. In addition, the study included an assessment of the commercial parking needs in support of a municipal parking facility in Takoma Park.

The study was conducted with assistance from the area residents[2]. The Study Team (Consultant, DDOT representatives and Takoma Park staff) held several meetings with area residents to discuss existing transportation issues. The area residents provided additional input via e-mail, regular correspondence and meetings with DDOT, Takoma Park and Consultant representatives. The Study Team also held several meetings with representatives of key local agencies, including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA), Ride On, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the City of Takoma Park and Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC). The input from the residents and the public agency representatives was helpful in the identification of key transportation issues and the identification of future levels of development in the study area.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

The Study Team identified a wide variety of existing and forecast transportation issues. Transit issues included lack of transit service to selected areas, inadequate pedestrian and bicycle access to the Metro station and inadequate location of taxi stand at the Metro station. Pedestrian issues included lack of sidewalks at critical locations, narrow sidewalks at selected locations, poor conditions of ADA access ramps, lack of pedestrian signals and sub-standard pedestrian signing near schools. Parking issues included insufficient parking for commercial needs at selected locations, lack of parking meters at key locations, inadequate striping for parking and lack of parking enforcement. Bicycle issues included lack of bicycle route to the Metro station, lack of bicycle route signs for designated bicycle routes and conflicts between vehicles and bicycles. Traffic operations issues included congestion along major roadways and at critical intersections, speeding, cut-through traffic, lack of turn lanes at selected intersections, non-optimized signal timings and unsafe intersection geometry.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Study Team, with the assistance of the area residents[3], developed an extensive list of preliminary suggestions that could be implemented to address the identified transportation issues. The Study Team evaluated the suggested improvements and developed an extensive list of short-

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[1] Completed in the year 2002.
[2] Appendix H summarizes citizens' comments presented during public meetings.
[3] Appendix I provides a summary of comments made by residents during the public meetings.

term and long-term recommendations to address the identified transportation issues. The recommended improvements are shown in Figures 54 through 57. Planning level cost estimates for the implementation of each the recommended improvements are provided in Appendix J.

The implementation of these improvements would enhance transportation operations in the study area. An improvement that would enhance traffic operations significantly is the optimization of signal timings throughout the study area. As shown in Figure 58 for 2012, the optimization of signal timings[1] and implementation of other recommended improvements are expected to improve LOS by at least one letter grade at 11 of the 24 studied intersections during the AM peak hour. During the PM peak hour, LOS is expected to improve by at least one letter grade at ten of the 24 studied intersections. Seven intersections are expected to operate at the same LOS during the 2012 AM peak hour with improvements, while six intersections are expected to operate at the same LOS during the PM peak hour.

Examples of critical intersections where when compared to the unimproved scenarios, LOS with optimization and improvements remains the same but delay decreases are Georgia and Eastern Avenues; Blair Road/Cedar Street/4th Street; and Aspen Street and Georgia Avenue.

As shown in Figure 59 for 2022, the optimization of signal timings and implementation of other recommended improvements are expected to improve LOS by at least one letter grade at eight of the 24 studied intersections during the AM peak hour. During the PM peak hour, LOS is expected to improve by at least one letter grade at nine of the 24 studied intersections. Nine intersections are expected to operate at the same LOS during the 2012 AM peak hour with improvements, while 15 intersections are expected to operate at the same LOS during the PM peak hour.

Examples of critical intersections where when compared to the unimproved scenarios, LOS with optimization and improvements remains the same but delay decreases are Georgia and Eastern Avenues; Blair Road/Cedar Street/4th Street; and Aspen Street and Georgia Avenue.

In most cases where intersection delay increases, it is the result of improved traffic flows at upstream intersections reaching a bottleneck point in the corridor. An example of this is the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Piney Branch Road. While delay increases at this intersection during the AM peak hour, signal optimization is expected to reduce delay at four of the remaining five studied intersections on Piney Branch Road. The ability of traffic to flow more freely through these upstream intersections increases the number of vehicles at Georgia Avenue and Piney Branch Road, further congesting this intersection. Levels of service for all analyzed intersections, under a variety of scenarios including the implementation of all recommended improvements, are presented in Table 28.

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[1] Appendix K provides optimized signal timings for the Study Area intersections.

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Figure 59. Existing and 2022 Projected Levels of Service